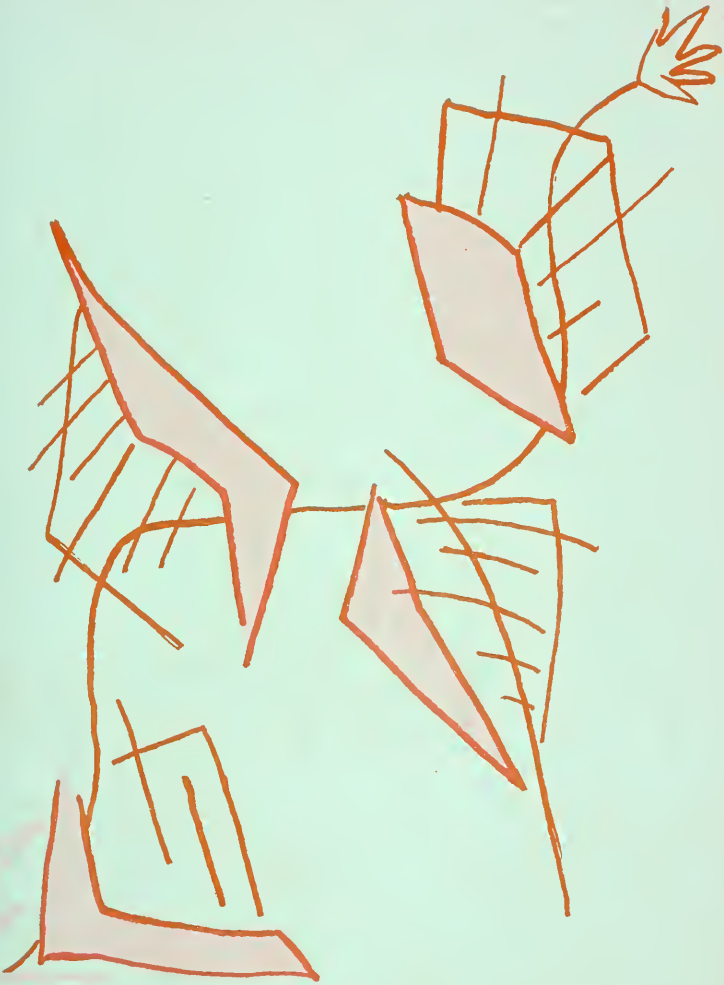

Colonnade

Longwood College • Spring 1962

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Colonnade

LONGWOOD COLLEGE
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA
SPRING · 1962

Volume XXIV Number 3

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Printed by The Dietz Press, Inc.
109 East Cary Street
Richmond 19, Virginia

About the Contest

The *Colonnade* Literary Contest is held annually each spring. There were three categories announced for this contest—essay, poetry, and short story. However, since so few essays were entered, it was the judges' decision to cancel the essay category, and instead, to award third prizes in the short story and poetry divisions. The judges also awarded a special prize to an entry submitted that did not seem to fit into any of the categories.

The *Colonnade* would like to thank all those who submitted entries to the contest. This year's contest has been very successful, not only in the quantity of the entries, but also in their quality.

This year there were two faculty judges and one student judge. These judges were selected by the literary board of the *Colonnade*.

The student judge was Judy Detrich, a senior English major from Hampton, Virginia. She is the past editor of the *Colonnade* and has been feature editor of the *Rotunda*. She is a member of Pi Delta Epsilon, Beorc Eh Thorn, Alpha Kappa Gamma, and is senior class historian. Her plans for the immediate future include touring Europe this summer and teaching English in Arlington this fall.

Mr. Ellington White received the A.B. degree from Kanyon College and the M.A. degree from Johns Hopkins University. He has taught at Mississippi Southern College, the University of Richmond, and since the fall of 1961 has been teaching at Longwood. His short stories and essays have been published in the *Sewanee Review*, the *Quarterly Review of Literature*, *New Story Magazine*, *Georgia Review*, and *The Provincial*. He has also contributed to two anthologies of Southern literature, *The Lasting South*, and *South: Modern Southern Literature*.

Mr. Charles E. Butler, librarian at Longwood, received the B.A. and B.L.S. degrees from the University of Denver and the M.L.S. degree from the University of Michigan. He has had poetry published in the *New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *Poetry Magazine*. He is the author of *Cut Is the Branch*, a volume of poetry, and *Follow Me Ever*, a novel.

Colonnade Sketches

Evelyn Gray, a sophomore elementary major from Portsmouth, is the author of *Mere ou Soeur*, the first place short story. Last fall Evelyn contributed her first story *Request the Honor* to the *Colonnade*.

The short story is Evelyn's favorite literary form at the present time; because, in a few typed pages a realistic character can exist, set forth a strong personal conflict, and resolve or accept the conflict—"the best short psychology lesson that I know of," she says.

George Bernard Shaw's plays and the novels of Thomas Wolfe and John Steinbeck have special appeal to Evelyn as a change from the short story form. She feels that each of these does an exceptionally clear and powerful job of portraying characters and social conflicts.

In art she admires the nearly perfect expressions of the painters from da Vinci to Dali; in music "Beethoven is the height — Dakota Statan, my idea of an artist too, with her own style of expression—that's the big word—expression."

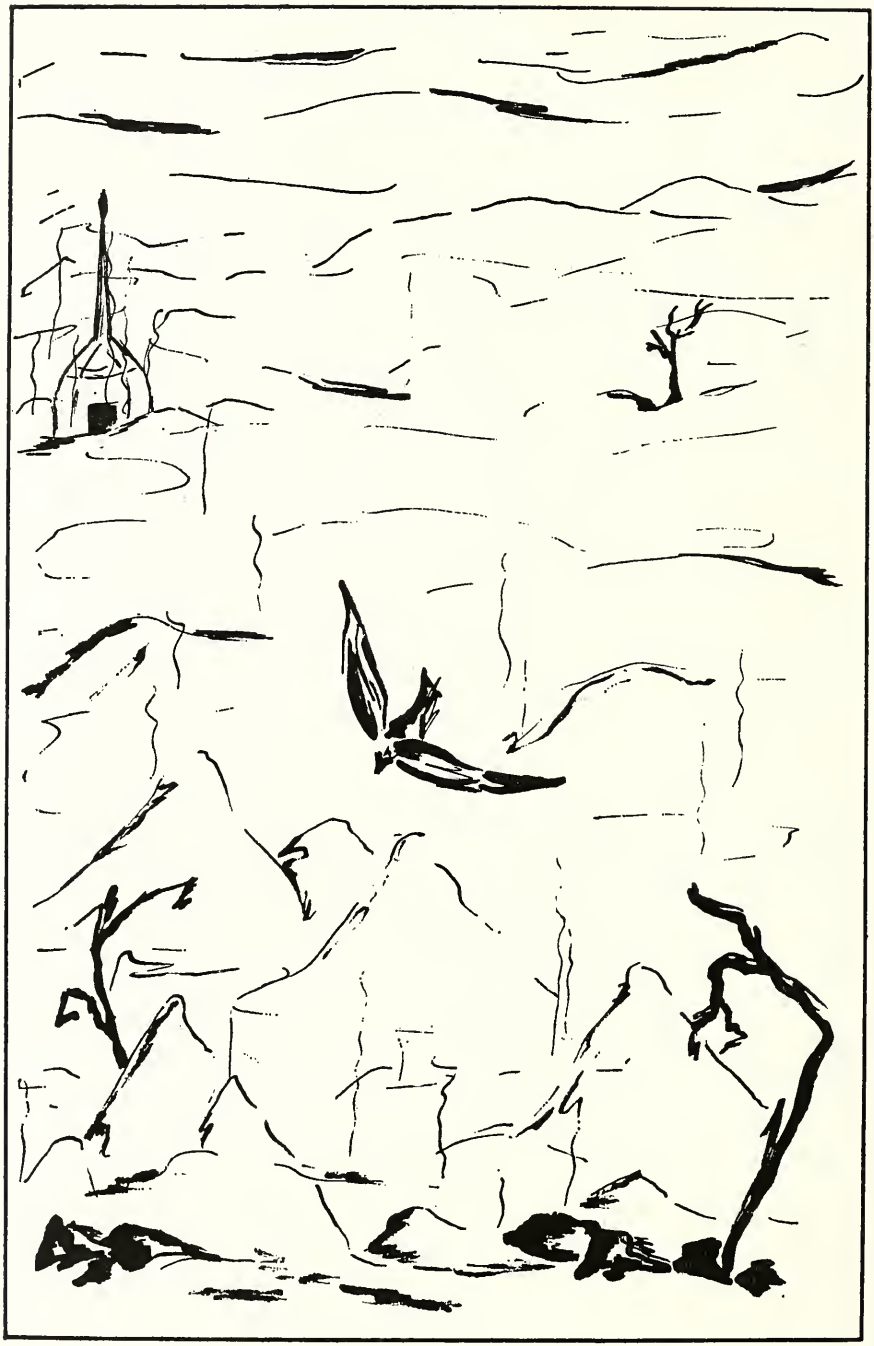
The future for Evelyn points to a teaching career in a Virginia elementary school.

* * *

Peggy Pond, a sophomore English and social science major from Portsmouth, is the second place winner in the poetry division. Peggy has been writing poetry since she was ten ("mostly about horses until I was twelve"). She was a contributor to the recent parody issue of the *Colonnade*.

Peggy's favorite poet is T. S. Eliot, but she also enjoys reading Sara Teasdale. Her favorite novelist is William Faulkner because "he expresses what I have often felt in a nebulous manner." A music fan, Peggy expecially enjoys the operas of Verdi. She has also become interested in the field of parapsychology.

Future plans for Peggy include travel and study in Europe this summer. After graduation she plans to teach English and history in secondary school.



YERMA*

Weary of his land of exile,
the white bird flies home to find
it changed from verdant hills
to peaks of sand.
Gasping for breath in the dry air,
he settles to rest on rocks, bald
in the blazing sun,
And his tears fall on the sand
and crystallize there
like bits of petrified wood.

Here there is no oasis for a parched throat,
nothing but shadows of dreams roaming nomad-like
over shifting dunes;
And the temple, its white pinnacle spiring into the sky,
archingly lovely to the eye:
A shaft of sunlight on it beckons,
but there will be no welcome.
The high altar stands bare of offerings;
the dust of its long-dead flowers are scattered,
their scent forever lost.

Alice Joy Peele

*Feminine form of the Spanish word for wasteland.

MISS HALLOWAY'S GARDEN

By Susan Crisman

The sound of the iron notes struck by the turn of the train wheels—click-clack, click-clack—rolled into one heavy rumble, and "miles to go before I sleep" kept repeating itself in my mind. My eyes wandered to the scene outside my window: first the stockyards filled with cattle milling behind board fences followed by buildings of steel grey and soot-black brick walls crowded around corregated steel warehouses; then the countryside with its rolling hills, tall trees, short trees, telephone and electric poles, farmhouses, silos, barns, more cattle and fences: miles of fences of every description—encircling, winding up and around hills, through glistening streams; fences of barbed wire, iron railing, stone, wood—all sturdy and protective, each apportioning God's good earth, and each, to dreamers like me, an invitation to greener pastures beyond. It's true, good fences do make good neighbors. Miss Halloway's fence was one of the best ever made.

"I needed a retaining wall to keep the soil from being washed away every time the rains came, but the contractor told me the cost would be at least a thousand dollars. One day I spotted a photo in the newspaper of the breakwater pilings along the waterfront near my home in South Carolina and I knew that if those palmetto poles could hold back waves, cedar poles could hold rain trickles!"

Miss Halloway's words raced through my mind as smoothly as the passing scene. "I hauled thirty good-sized cedar stalks myself to the backyard and Amos built a retaining wall as sturdy and durable as a stone wall. Now I'd have topsoil for my azaleas."

Miss Halloway loved azaleas. Said they reminded her of her South Carolina. I never understood why she moved away from that state.

"I wanted to move South Carolina here," she would often comment. "See those evergreens by the fence?" She would point out four towering evergreens growing by the stockade fence while we sat together on the garden patio above. "Brought them here as seedlings that I found in the woods near Fort Jackson. They're cedars of Lebanon, rare trees to find even in the Holy Land nowadays. I planted them to shade my azaleas.

"Had my soil analyzed after the wall was up. The man told me that I could never grow anything much in this pipe clay foundation. Said it was the meanest, most impossible soil in the world. But I worked it and fertilized until I had flowers alive and thriving.

"I have to be careful to fertilize this soil because it has so much lime content. When the house was restored, (Miss Halloway was reluctant to talk about its Civil War past) the plasterers used my back-

yard as a veritable dumping ground. There was a pile of plaster, lathing and wire so high it reached the porch, as high as it is. Most of it was hauled away, but much of the plaster was mixed into the soil when the hill was terraced. Lime sweetens the soil and azaleas are acid-loving plants, you know."

There was always Miss Halloway and her azaleas; at least, from the day my parents and I moved to Dayton. I wasn't sure just why Dad chose this place, but I do know that he and Mom were unhappy in our hometown. About a year before the move, Dad realized his life-long dream: to go into business for himself. With a small portion of the fortune that had been left her by her late husband, my aunt gave Dad the backing he needed to start a small lumber corporation. Her generosity to her eldest brother was short-lived however, for within the year, before the business had time to show a substantial profit, she yanked out the financial props and with them my father's heart.

Times were bad. Mom would cry and say she wished he'd never started the thing, while Dad would rant about the injustice of it all or, worse still, sit back in his stuffed chair, close his eyes and ears, and thus blot out Mom, me, and the rest of the world. Consultations with lawyer after lawyer proved useless, for none would take any sincere interest in his problem, except one old member of the firm who did look into the matter, but *he* suffered a fatal heart attack before making any progress.

It was finally decided that moving away would be the best thing, Mom's conviction only, I'm sure now. But be that as it may, move we did, to Dayton. Dad still had his moments of depression, and it was during those times that I found the silence within the house unbearable. I loved my father. I wanted to help him. But what could a 15 year old do? Rich aunts and callous lawyers were beyond me.

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A PARABLE . . . By Betty Ann Atkinson

ONCE upon a time there were two hunters of the forest. One was named Hypo and the other was named Styx. Hypo, a small, but muscular and skilled marksman from the south, and Styx, a massive, skilled sharpshooter from the north, passed many years together in the forest hunting small game for food. Occasionally Hypo and Styx ventured out from their little hut to kill small prey like squirrel and fox for the sheer pleasure of killing, but both realized that such activity could not be carried to extremes, for it was against the laws of the forest. Despite these laws, however, Hypo and Styx did from time to time kill for pleasure, leaving their small victims to the mercy of the vultures, the sun, and the wolves. But this they did in secret. One day, it is said, Hypo wandered into a remote part of the forest where everything was dark and cool and damp, where the vines wound gracefully and mysteriously around the banyon and sycamore trees and where all manner of animal life pervaded in delicious abundance. Such pleasant sounds and smells and sights greeted the adventurous Hypo as he crept curiously through the thick, green vegetation! Such bright and enticing colors were in flight about him! Hypo trembled with joy at the thought of having discovered such a place—a place remote from the natural law of the forest; a place teeming with all manner of animal life from the lowliest winged ginch, to the biggest and strongest bear. Unable to control his desire to use his polished musket, Hypo took aim and fired, striking a brown bear dead in the bush. A tingling joy filled Hypo's heart and swept through his entire body. With excitement in his blood, with the heat of joy in his bones, Hypo quickly ran from this remote place to the little hut, which was about two-hundred moose-lengths away. He did at last reach the hut, and, of course, Styx, who was brooding over his unpolished musket (it had not been fired for days). With the enthusiasm of a child he related his wonderful experience. Styx became overjoyed, sprang up from his wicker hassock and polished his musket. The two hunters then ran from the hut to the mysterious and wonderful place where natural law did not reign and there spent the afternoon hours shooting a great variety of animal life. Both were happy indeed, overjoyed at their discovery. But with twilight both Hypo and Styx realized that they had killed all of the animals there were to kill. "There are no more," Hypo whispered. Styx had to agree. So both trudged solemnly back to the little hut. For many months Hypo and Styx mourned in their hut for the return of the abundance of prey. Each day they would visit the once-wonderful place, only to find it barren, desolate, scattered with bones and withered branches. One day, however, Hypo suggested that they go even further away from their little hut, into the Valley of

Emeralds. There, Hypo said, much game could be found. Indeed, all the wonders of nature were said to abound in the Valley—all manner of animal and plant life, suffused with cool running waters and spouting mineral springs and effervescent fruits such as papaya and avocado. Lured on by the thoughts of such a paradise, Styx agreed to venture there with Hypo. His heart pounded when he thought of such a place. Imagine the hours of delicious hunting, followed by the perfect and blissful nourishment of tropical fruits and cool juices! The two trudged on toward the Valley, and Styx listened, enraptured. His heart beat louder and harder. Every once in a while his desire was whetted by the sight of a giraffe in the distant palms, or the sound of a gazelle thumping through the plain. Such sights and sounds intensified his determination to go on. But Hypo was beginning to suffer from exhaustion. The snags of the jungle and the blazing heat began to take their toll on him. Once he collapsed onto a bamboo arch, low to the ground. Another time he said that it was no use, he could not go on. Styx, his heart inflamed with the desire to discover the Valley of Emeralds, pleaded with him and, seeing that there was no way to persuade him, carried him over his shoulder. After days of hard going, the two hunters arrived at the River of Emeralds. It flowed from the very center of the Valley and was clear and blue, teeming with all manner of tropical fish. Across its rich blue and rippled waters . . . the splendor and magnificence of the Valley of Emeralds, radiating in the gentle afternoon sun. It rolled downward in delicious green waves and was speckled with red and crimsons and yellows—the marks of vibrant life. Through it ran many crystal blue rivers, which could be clearly seen. Stately bamboos and palms arose above it and beckoned to the two exhausted onlookers. A cool breeze swept across the river and veiled the hot faces of Hypo and Styx. Mineral springs and warm water geysers were interspersed in the Valley for miles. And towering above the green paradise was a great blue mountain—the Mountain of Gheddo. Styx, once unwilling to venture into the Valley, grabbed the shores of the river, the rich black shores, with desire. Hypo, however, called his attention to a sign on the far banks of the flowing waters. It read:

> All those who would cross the River of Emeralds must first construct a boat 10 cubits high and ten cubits wide and 40 cubits long. Then they must cross the Great River in that boat. This all must do before crossing the Great River.

Having read the sign, the once-eager Hypo, now exhausted by months of hardship, retreated from the River, vowing to return to the forest and the little hut. Styx tried to persuade him to cross the River, but could

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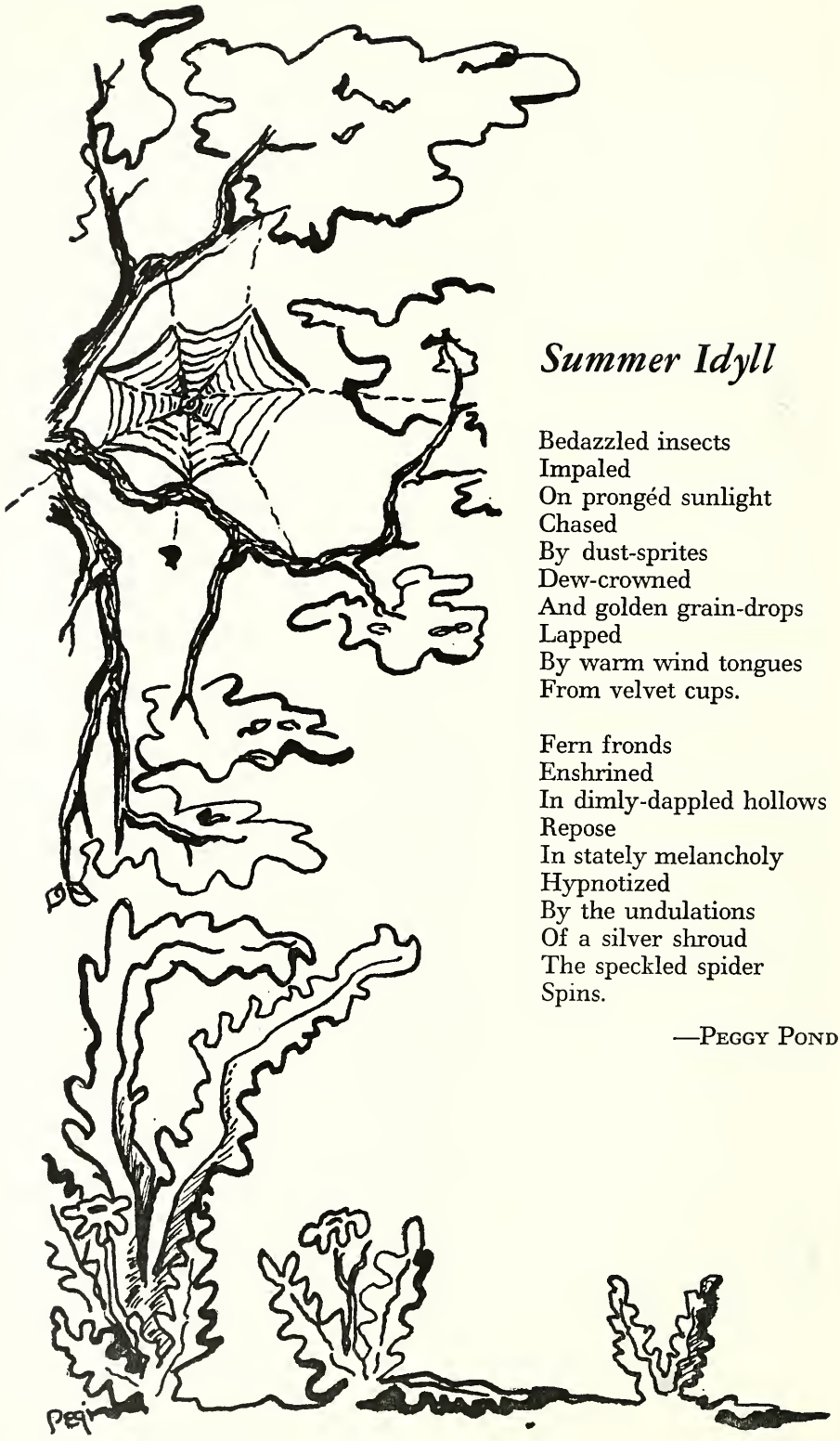

Summer Idyll

Bedazzled insects
Impaled
On prongéd sunlight
Chased
By dust-sprites
Dew-crowned
And golden grain-drops
Lapped
By warm wind tongues
From velvet cups.

Fern fronds
Enshrined
In dimly-dappled hollows
Repose
In stately melancholy
Hypnotized
By the undulations
Of a silver shroud
The speckled spider
Spins.

—Peggy Pond

The Same Color As Snow

By Donna M. Humphlett

FOR several minutes, Frank Craig stood in front of his fireplace watching the flames jump up the chimney. There was no other light in the room and alone it provided scant illumination. Above him shadows—his and the flames,—moved about on the ceiling. He watched them for a moment and then turned his back to the flames and looked out the glass front of his home. Even though it had turned dark he had not bothered to draw the curtains. Actually there was no need to draw them, for no one could see in his window. It had been one of the things he had insisted upon—a glass wall in the living room. He had always wanted one.

It had stopped snowing and the whiteness of the snow reflecting the light of the moon provided the outside's only light. Down below—his house was on a high hill—lights were being turned on one by one. And he could see cars driving along the highway. It seemed odd that the light from the headlights blended into one ribbon of light when viewed from where he stood. But he liked it. It was one of the reasons he liked living up where he did. He gazed out the window until he was no longer conscious of seeing anything—just shadows of things.

Many minutes later he decided he wanted a drink. He walked from the living room where he had been standing to the kitchen, switched on the light, walked over to the sink, reached in the cabinet above the sink, and got out a highball glass.

Holding the glass in his left hand, he walked over to the refrigerator, opened the door, got out an ice tray, closed the door, and walked back to the sink. Then, he turned the water (HOT) on and let it run over the ice cubes. "Three should be enough," he said aloud to no one. He picked out three ice cubes, placed them in the glass, and reached into the cabinet over the sink, this time getting out a fifth of bourbon.

After pouring two jiggers of bourbon into the glass, he put the bottle back on the shelf, closed the door and then added water (COLD) to the bourbon. After mixing the drink, he walked to the door of the kitchen, switched out the light, and walked back into the living room, and stood in front of the fireplace.

Again he stood there watching the flames and their shadows. He lifted the drink to his mouth; then, half-deliberately, half-accidentally he dropped the glass. Liquid and ice flew spewing and sputtering into the fireplace—some of it spread across the hearth and dripped to the floor. The glass spiralled out from the point where it had fallen; only one large piece lay at the spot where the glass had hit the floor. Craig kicked at this piece of glass and laughed.

continued on next page

He walked over to the chair in front of the glass front and picked up his overcoat and put it on. Then he walked to the front door and slipped on his rubber boots, and went outside.

It was snowing again, making it impossible for him to see the highway and its ribbons of light. He walked around to the side of the house—the side where the shadows were all day. At his feet were icicles; he kicked at them, and saw that water dripping from the roof had frozen on the winter grass forming little stalagmites. He kicked at all of them, knocking the ice off the grass. He kicked at the grass, then crushed it into the ground.

By then, he was cold. He went back into the house and stood in front of the fireplace to warm himself. Some of the liquid had evaporated, but most of it was still on the hearth.

He walked over to the same chair and returned his overcoat to the place where he had found it. It was late; he went to bed.

* * * * * * *

He decided the next afternoon (Sunday) in spite of the heavy snow, he should visit the Marshalls. He had not seen them since they had visited him two Sundays ago and they were among his best friends. He called them and they said yes that they were not planning to go anywhere and they would welcome company.

He dressed—the navy blue suit, navy tie, and white oxford cloth shirt, and the shoes he had bought in London last summer—then put on his overcoat and rubber boots.

He went out the door in the kitchen which opened on the car port. He got into the car; it took about five minutes before the car would start. Then he began the precarious drive down the hill. Several times he skidded, but he finally made it to the highway which had already been cleared.

Within five minutes, he was at the Marshalls' home. He was greeted at the front door by their young son, Jimmy, "Mommy'll be in here in a few minute—she's in the kitchen. And Daddy's in the bathroom. Mommy, Frank is here."

"All right, Jimmy. I'll be there in a few minutes, Frank. Walt's upstairs."

Frank laughed as he took his overcoat and boots off. "Jimmy told me."

He sat down on the couch and the boy began showing him what he could do: Somersaults, toe-touches, jumping from chairs. Frank found himself actually enjoying it.

Within five minutes of each other, the parents made their entrances —the mother first. "Hi, Frank. Sorry, I kept you waiting, but I was

in the middle of getting some cookies out of the oven."

"I understand, Alice. I cook myself."

Then the father, "Hi, Frank. How're you doing?"

"Fine."

"Are you going to Meg's party at the country club?"

"Yes, I might."

"Really, Frank. It sounds like a damn good party." Frank laughed, "Meg . . ." and then stopped.

"Look, Frank. I can do a somersault."

"Really, Jimmy. Can't you behave? Have you seen Laura recently, Frank? *I* saw her yesterday in Maxine's. She was shopping for a dress."

Jimmy left the living room and went stomping up the stairs to his room. Frank reached into his breast pocket and got out his cigarettes. After lighting one, he answered Alice, "No, I haven't." He took a long drag from the cigarette.

"She has the most marvelous taste in clothes."

"Yes, she does have good taste."

"Oh, she's the most intelligent friend I have—art, literature, music. Just everything."

Frank took another long drag from his cigarette.

"Drink, Frank? Alice, will you get some ice? I'll get the other things." Walt walked over to the drink cabinet and got out a bottle of soda and a bottle of scotch. "Hope this is all right, Frank. Haven't bought anything recently, so we're down to this."

"That's fine, Walt—just forget the ice."

"Hurry up with the ice, Alice, will you, if *you* want a drink."

"Walt, *the way* to deal with people, women especially, is to wait on them; then, you become their master."

Walt laughed. "Try telling her that. If I were to . . ."

"It works. I've used it often enough."

Alice came back into the living room with a cup of coffee in her hand. "I really didn't want one. Besides, I'd rather have a cup of coffee this early in the day."

Jimmy re-entered the room with a plastic version of a Colt .45. "Look, Frank. I got this just the other day."

"Say, that is nice. My grandfather had a gun just like that. He was a deputy sheriff in Wichita, Kansas."

"Did he kill anybody?"

"His gun had four notches on it. So I imagine he killed four men."

"Four men? He must've been strong."

Walt handed Frank the drink he had made. "Jimmy, why don't you go watch television?"

"Really, Walt, don't chase him off. I enjoy him."

continued on page 27

I AM

The white-masked doctor—feet apart
Eyes intent—strained
Beads of moisture on his forehead,
He waits—
The fight!
The plunge!
He holds the bloody mucus-covered life,
The germ-destructive light blazes overhead,
The life giving connection is severed.

A cry—
I am!
The fullness of being,
Resounding along the stratospheric wave,
Consumed in time,
Forgotten by man,
Tossed and abused,
Desired by him,
Digested in his incomprehensive mind,
Sought,
And sometimes
Felt,
But never known.

GAYLE RAY

MERE OU SOEUR

By Evelyn Gray

"Is Jack coming home tonight?" the child asked, squinting and looking at the young woman.

"Maybe," the same answer—always maybe; "Maybe Jack will be here later."

"It's dark already now. Liza, why didn't Jack come home last night?"

She turned her head slowly to the boy, and he could see that her eyes had a glazed look. "You ask too many questions, little boy." She patted his head and forced a weak smile. Her eyes were warm behind the film that covered them. The boy put his arm around her knees so that she couldn't move her legs to take a step.

"I love you more than anything," he said. "Can I go to bed now?"

"Yes, it's time for bed now, Eric. Everybody is asleep except you and Liza. Let's go upstairs, and I'll tuck you in."

"Liza, everybody but you and me—in bed, asleep. Liza—"

"Yes?"

"Liza, is Jack in bed too—somewhere—asleep?" The girl hesitated and then smiled at his questioning face.

"Jack's all right, Eric; don't worry about Jack."

"But, is he in bed too, like everybody else? Is he, Liza?" He pulled impatiently at her skirt, and he was frowning now. She pulled his hand away.

She wanted to scream at him to stop being a baby, but she only said, "Yes, Eric, most probably Jack's in bed too."

"Liza?"

"No more questions tonight, Eric. You're going to sleep now. Stop asking questions and come upstairs." She led him up the flight of steps, and he resisted, pouting.

"Maybe he's here and fooled us—in his bed; let's look, Liza. Do you think maybe—"

"Jack's not here; he'll be here tomorrow." She snapped now. The boy looked up again.

"Did he tell you so?" The questioning little voice was edged with contempt.

"Yes, Eric, good night now. If you say another word about Jack, it will make him stay away. Now, go to sleep." She turned down the covers, and he crawled into bed.

"Like bad luck—huh, Liza?"

"What, dear little boy?" She asked defeatedly. "What's like bad luck?"

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"Like if a black cat runs in front of you. I mean, if I say J-a-c-k," he spelled the name, "then J-a-c-k won't come home tomorrow. Good night, Liza!" He turned quickly and buried his head in his pillow.

"Say your prayers to God by yourself, and don't be selfish." She pulled the blanket over him and turned out the light.

It was only 8:30 at night, and she heaved a sigh of frustration or relief, as she tiptoed down the steps. The house was dark now except for the living room, and she went there to sit and read a magazine and listen to the clock tick—tick—tick away the time. Where is Jack—where is Jack—where is Jack—tick, tick—tick, tick—tick, tick. Her father—where was he? Oh, yes, yes—Civic Club meeting in town—nine miles—long miles away. Her head dropped to the sofa pillow, and she lay there in a stupor with the light glaring down. The clock kept ticking and gave the half conscious girl confidence—confidence that time was going and someone would be here soon—Jack—her father—someone had to come soon and help her. She couldn't do it alone. She was nineteen, the so-called beautiful age — when girls wished to be twenty and no older. She didn't wish for twenty. She wished for seventeen. Her mother had been alive then, and they had all been together, but—well—now—she was nineteen, and her mother was dead.

Eric—someone had to help Eric. He was only a small child—where is Jack? Where is Jack? Her mind wound on and on until she finally woke herself with a little shriek. "Oh my God, dear God." She sat up and then walked to the door and peered out.

The country-side was dark and foggy. She could hear only the crickets singing and the small bugs flying into the screen making little thumping noises. It seemed to be no use, no use at all. Oh, he was fine. Jack would always be fine. He was her brother, yes — her brother, not her son—so why worry—he was seventeen years old. He was grown, wasn't he? He was all right. Of course he was. Her father would be home soon too. She looked at the clock again—ten minutes to nine. She wondered if Eric were asleep. She would go and see. Eric was such a poor, dear, sweet child. Yes, she'd see if he were asleep.

Liza's father didn't come home until nearly three o'clock in the morning. She was awake when he walked into his room below hers. He had stopped at Mercer McFadden's to talk about the meeting, she knew. He seemed so caught up in the civic activities of the community that little else could be seen. Liza's mother had died that winter while she was at school in Maryland, and she had come home to keep her men going—her father, her brothers—Eric and Jack. Two of these were in the house now—one who would not sleep for thinking about civic ac-

tivities; because he could not sleep anyhow, and it was best to think of civic activities than of other things. Eric was dreaming; Eric always dreamed. It was strange that he'd never asked about his mother. "She's dead; she can't come home anymore. God will take care of her." He was seven years old and he knew this. Liza was almost envious of his attitude. How could he be so complacent? He was young, naive, that was it. How could he be expected to feel the loss to any degree, and yet—was it fair? How could it be fair that she and Jack and her father had to feel it so much when Eric rested in peace?

In the morning Liza fixed scrambled eggs and put them on the three plates on the table in the kitchen. Her father sat down and looked at her. "You didn't worry last night, did you, Baby?"

"No, Daddy. I thought you were at Mercer's. Was it a bad meeting?"

"No, no, Baby—it was pretty dull, in fact." He tried to laugh. He looked so tired and ill, but Liza didn't tell him so.

"Is Eric awake, Liza?"

"He'll be down in a minute, Daddy."

"I'll yell."

"Okay."

"Eric. Eric!"

The pair of small feet flew down the steps. "Hi, Dad." He popped his fist into the big man's thigh, and his father pulled the boy's ear. "You look like a regular monkey, Eric—what awful ears."

"Yeah—monkeys like peanuts like me too. Ugh. I don't like eggs. Give me peanuts for breakfast, Liza. He laughed hard and his eyes sparkled. "Wouldn't that be funny—huh, Dad—peanuts for breakfast for monkeys." He went into hysterics. His father laughed too—that tired laugh, but he laughed. Liza smiled, and this morning she thanked God for Eric.

Before Mr. Lavaine and Eric left the farm that morning, Liza's father asked if Jack had called.

"No, I wish you'd—"

"No, Jack's okay, can't alarm people. He's okay. He'll be back. Eric understands. He'll say Jack is sick. He'll be home, Liza. He's just at a wild age, that's all."

"He's so tired—so sick," she thought. She hated Jack for doing this to her father. Wild? No—Jack was bad. That was all, wasn't it? Wasn't it? He had no reason to leave without a word. Did he think he was grown and independent or something? Is that what he thought? Selfish, that's what he was. How could he—"Where *is* he?"

Her own words startled Liza, and she slammed resentfully toward the kitchen to do the dishes, that exciting task made especially for the beautiful age. She stopped and peered into the hall mirror. She saw

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Existence

By Sandra Weaver

When I awaken I lie quietly, refusing to open my eyes. I lie with my ears straining to hear the sounds from outside my window. I lie in a state of anticipation . . . in anticipation that I will hear something more than the waves beating the breakwall, or the seagulls calling to the rising sun. I wait . . . and only if I hear the longed-for sound of raindrops as they fall and mingle with the grains of sand do I open my eyes. Not until then do I wish to arise.

When the releasing sound doesn't come, I close my ears to the other sounds outside and go back to sleep. I do not arise until hours later to begin my work, and then I arise with reluctance, knowing the day I face will be a day of sunshine . . . of emptiness.

I haven't always done this way, but now it is so hard to remember the way I used to be. I know I used to greet each sunny morning with such fervor that I would tear from the bindings of my bed before sunrise. After dressing hurriedly, I would rush down to the seawall so I would be ready to paint as the sunlight first began to reflect off of my canvas. There I would remain all morning, painting until I was exhausted . . . until I had satisfied the drives within me. Only then would I leave the sunshine and return to the house. These things I know, even though I do not remember them, for I must have done them, I must.

The days when it rained were like any others then. I would have to do my painting indoors, of course, but I even welcomed the change. In a way I enjoyed the rain, for I could paint by the front window which overlooked the bay. Through the mist I watched the fishermen check their crab pots and oyster beds, unprotected from the water which attacked them from all sides. As I watched, I could feel their emotions grabbing at me, forcing me to understand them and to transfer their lives into my oils. As I watched through the rain I understood and I painted.

Then came the day when things began to change. I awoke to the sound of raindrops hitting my window. Instead of getting up quickly as was my habit, I lay for awhile, listening to the water as it ran down the roof and spattered under my window. I also listened for something else, but I wasn't really certain what it was or why I felt compelled to try. I seemed to feel more than I heard.

Still feeling quite unsure of what was wrong with me, I arose, dressed, and went into the kitchen to fix breakfast. I sat toying with the rough chipped place on my cup until my coffee grew cold, and I still couldn't figure out what was bothering me. Deciding that I was a fool for feeling so strange, I pushed my thoughts away, got some hot coffee, and finished breakfast.

I set up my easel in the front of the window and began searching the bay for my rainy-day friends, the wet fishermen, hoping that maybe today would be the day that I would at last paint something more than just what I saw before me. But every morning I wished this . . . wished that I could look at my canvas and feel that I knew these fishermen, not that they had become just an impersonal part of my painting and nothing more. Their lives I could never capture, even a tiny bit of them. I could capture nothing more than the oils my brush smoothed on the canvas into forms, but I always hoped that I would become an artist one day, instead of a painter.

As I looked out over the bay, my eyes kept returning to the pier that stretched far out into the darkness of the water. For some strange reason I felt an uncontrollable impulse to paint this pier that had never interested me before. A pier, an old barren pier surrounded by nothing but the dark and turbulent water.

Quickly, I began to mix my oils. The blues mustn't be too green, I thought to myself . . . add more black, add more black. No horizon, I decided, just the water, the endless water must cover my canvas. It must be done quickly, quickly, I want it done quickly, so I can begin on the browns, the blacks . . . the pier.

My thoughts came to an abrupt halt as I layed an end to the water on my canvas. Eagerly I glanced out the window, surveyed the angle of the pier. No sketches first, I decided. Just paint, just work . . .

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not. Both knew that to construct such a boat would require years of hard work. Hypo was willing to wait, but Styx, made wild by the lure of the jungle and the exotic atmosphere which had gradually wrapped itself around him, could not. Hypo, in a fit of rage, tore himself from Styx and ran into the dense vegetation from whence they had come. Styx followed in pursuit, but to no avail.

"DESCENT"

He knew my soul and struck well the keys that brought forth my saddest harmonies.
And I—I was not even as strong as a spider that once his web is broken,
Over and over he will work to mend it again. I mended not my life.
My delightful morning star now darkens into midnight melancholy
For lo, the cold hand of death extends its icy fingers
And my whole being moves forth to meet its master.
Clasp tight this clamy hand of mine!
For Satan himself is fearful lest
He lose my one last offering.
My dust is speechless, it
Has no epitaph to
Mark the day
I offered
Satan a
lost
soul.

—Judy Beck

Mom would shush any comforting phrases I might utter with her usual words of wisdom of "Don't worry, dear, Dad'll be all right," and that would be that. And as quickly as I could I would dart out the back door and run down the steps across the yard into Miss Halloway's garden where I could always find solace among her flowers and pleasant chatter.

The fact that Miss Halloway was in her eighties didn't seem to hinder her from piddling in her garden from sunup to sundown when spring weather came 'round. And she had every right to beam when visitors marveled at the scene from her back porch. A perfect spot for picnics and teas, Miss Halloway's garden was a rainbow of reds, blues, yellows, greens in a variety of growing things. Through the spreading branches of the evergreens, the tin roof of a warehouse below appeared in the sunlight like a mirror lake. The busy traffic on the highway below, too, was hardly audible so that life within the garden wall was beautiful, private, and serene.

"Are you comfortable, ma'am?" The conductor's question aroused me from my daydream.

"Fine, thank you. When will we be arriving in Dayton?"

"In about one hour."

Yes, ma'am. No ma'am. Amos used to say. I don't remember a time when he gave voice to more than those words. Amos was an honest, hard working young Negro boy when Miss Halloway had hired him, just after purchasing her home in Dayton, to be a jack-of-all-trades: errand boy, gardener, house cleaner. He was in his fifties I guess when I knew Miss Halloway.

"I planted . . . I say *I* planted . . . she joked, "Me and Sal killed the bear" and the familiar glint of amusement shone in her eyes. "Amos did a lot of the planting. And he built those cinder block walls on the two terraces, then capped them with brick to blend with the housebrick. He's clever. For the patio, I selected the stones myself from the slate mine, then hauled them here in the trunk of my car. Took several trips, but that's the only way I could cut down on expenses and get the right size stones. Those builders'll bring in anything.

"Amos proved his worth on that job, too. See how perfectly those edge stones curve around the dogwood and down the terrace steps?

"Amos never charged much for his work. He knew that a schoolteacher's salary wasn't a great amount, and he enjoyed working in the garden as much as I. But he's getting old and tired, too."

I never like to hear Miss Halloway talk about death. It depressed me to think the subject would enter a mind so full of love of life and growing things. Indeed, it was never mentioned until she came back from a visit in South Carolina, during which time her sister died. I

continued on next page

guess the shock of it made her acutely aware of old age. At any rate, she talked of little else after that.

Shortly after she returned, my family and I moved to Stratford, where I found life to be quite different. In this city there were lots of friends to make, parties to attend, boyfriends to worry about, theatres and school functions; later, night clubs and more beaus, college, graduation, then marriage, all new fences to cross over into exciting experiences filling those ten years that passed before I was ever to visit Dayton again.

Then there were no more fences except the tidy white picket fence surrounding my house. I lapsed into a day to day routine of wash-clothes-on-Monday, bridge-club-on-Tuesday, maybe-a-cocktail-or-two-on-Saturday night, and Women of the Church meeting-on-Sunday.

Two evenings ago, after supper and a call from Mom, I came across an article in the *Star* concerning the homes of historic interest in Dayton. Miss Halloway's homeplace was among those mentioned, being now owned by the Society for the Preservation of Dayton Antiquities. "On sunny days," it said, "tea will be served in the gardens of the respective homes toured."

As it all came back to me, I mentioned to my husband that I would like to visit the place again. My intended response of "Too much work to do" to his "What's to stop you?" was, in a matter of seconds, examined and discarded for a more satisfying "Nothing, really", and I found myself happily making arrangements to take a long overdue trip.

A shiver of excitement ran through me as the train pulled to a halt at the Dayton train station. As if in a daze I withstood the wait for the cab, then the drive down Main Street around the corner up to the top of the hill on Elm.

Facing the old house once again, I could observe few changes that had taken place over these past years. In keeping with the local pride in history, the present occupants had well preserved this house where General Lee had visited and supped with General Breckenridge, then Confederate Secretary of War, and where, in an upstairs room, the last council of war for the Confederacy was held before Lee and his men pushed on to Appomattox.

I walked onto the gravel driveway, then made my way on the dirt path which brought me in short time to Miss Halloway's garden. I still felt the serenity of the spot as I ascended the slate steps to the third terrace. The rustic stockade fence was as durable and straight as before, holding in the topsoil now for someone else's beautiful flowers.

As I stooped to pick up a paper cup that had been left on the first terrace wall, I marveled at the wax-like quality of the plants around me. It would seem that I was the beholder of a verdant museum,

where each flower, tree, and boxwood had earlier been dusted and polished in preparation for the day's visitors. And the azaleas were gone. No one thought to fertilize the plot of ground under the cedars of Lebanon.

The moon was rising full and bright as I made my way through the streets to the hotel. I didn't mind the cool night air. I was in the mood for a brisk walk. I wonder if my backyard has a pipe clay foundation?

THE SAME COLOR AS SNOW (Continued from page 15)

"It's good that somebody can."

"Oh, Walt, don't you say anything. He spoils the child terribly, Frank. Why, if I didn't discipline him . . ."

Jimmy turned a somersault in the middle of the floor.

"It's the other way around, Frank. She spoils him; I discipline him."

Jimmy climbed up on the foot stool and jumped down.

"Really, Jimmy."

It was five-thirty when Frank decided to leave the Marshall home. "Could I borrow your son for three hours or so. If it's all right, I'd like to take him home with me for a while."

"Fine, if you can stand him."

"Yes, it'll be quiet here for a while, but could you stand it?"

"Yes, I think so."

Alice dressed the boy and said, "He's all yours. Don't let him take advantage of you. Be a good boy, Jimmy."

* * * * * * *

When they got to Frank's driveway, Frank said, "I think that we'd better walk. Hop on my back."

Jimmy hopped on Frank's back and together they began a twenty minute walk up the hill. When they finally made it up the hill, Frank put Jimmy down and unlocked the door. "You haven't been here in a long time, have you?"

"No, I haven't. But I hope you have something I can play with."

"Yes, I think I do. I should have something around here that you

continued on next page

can play with. Do you think a five year old can manage a game of darts?"

"I don't know. I've never tried. We don't have them. We have checkers, though."

When they walked into the living room, Frank took Jimmy's hat, gloves, snowsuit, and rubber boots off. Then he took his own coat and boots off.

The fire in the fireplace had died out. Frank put some logs and newspapers in the fireplace and started a new one. "What would you like for supper, Jimmy?"

"I don't know. We have grilled cheese sandwiches, sometimes at home, and milk."

"Would you like that?"

"Yeah. What can I play with?"

Frank went in the den and got an old chess set. "Why don't you play with this?"

"Is it a fancy checkers set?"

"I think you could call it that. Well, you play with it while I fix up some sandwiches and milk. We'll have cookies for dessert."

"My mommy made cookies today."

"These aren't homemade."

"That's all right. Mommy buys them sometimes, too."

There was something about the way the fire shining on the child's face which made him seem beautiful—all golden with fire leaping in his eyes, and shadows on his face. Frank leaned down and kissed the boy.

"I love you, Frank," the child said, and hugged him around the neck.

Frank stood up and patted the boy on the head. "I love you, too, Jimmy."

He went into the kitchen and began preparing their supper. He got the cheese and milk from the refrigerator and bread from the bread box. After putting the sandwiches on the grill, Frank went back into the living room. "*Are you having fun, Jimmy?*"

"Yes, I don't know how to play this game, though."

"Oh, you'll learn when you're older. It's a little complicated for you now."

"Where's your dart game?"

"In the den."

"Can we play?"

Frank looked at his watch, "For a few minutes. Then it'll be time to eat."

They walked back into the den together. Frank turned the light switch on. "There are the darts on the table and the target is on the

wall. I'll go first, so I can show you."

Frank picked up five darts and began throwing them at the target, "Not bad, Jimmy. I made three bulls-eyes."

Jimmy went to the target and stood on the chair beneath it and picked out the darts and returned to the spot where Frank had been standing.

"Why don't you get a little closer, Jimmy?"

"O.K." He moved forward several child paces and began throwing the darts. One of them stuck in the outer edge of the target; the rest of them stuck in the wall.

"Not a bad start, Jimmy."

"I like this."

"I do, too, very much. Well, you play some more while I finish preparing supper."

"O.K." And he started throwing the darts again.

Frank went back into the kitchen and took the sandwiches off the grill and poured the milk. He put the sandwiches on plastic plates and put them on the breakfast bar. "Are you ready, Jimmy?"

"Yeah." And he came running into the kitchen, "Hey Frank, what's this?" Jimmy had a small milk glass pitcher in his hand.

"Oh, it's just a little pitcher. You may have it if you like."

"Thanks." And he placed it in his pocket.

After dinner while Frank washed the dishes, Jimmy sat beside him on a stool. Once in a while he would dip the pitcher down into the water and then pour the water back into the sink. "I really like this pitcher, Frank."

"I'm glad you do."

When the dishes were washed and put away, the two went into the den and turned the television on.

"What would you like to watch?"

"It doesn't matter."

"Cowboys?"

"Yeah."

* * * * * * *

Then it was time to take Jimmy home again. Jimmy carefully put his pitcher in his pocket as they walked into the living room. The fire cast a soft glow about the room, and made the light hairs on the child's arms and legs glitter in its light. Again the fire danced in the child's eyes and again his face glowed golden.

Frank reached down and touched the golden cheek; he leaned down and kissed the fire in the child's eyes and he kissed the glittering hairs on his arms.

"Frank, are we going home?"

"Yes, I'll get your things."

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After he dressed the boy, Frank put his own overcoat and boots on; and he put Jimmy on his back. Together they went outside.

"It's snowing again, Frank."

"Yes, I know."

"I wish it would always snow."

"Always?"

"Yes, it's better than rain."

Frank laughed, "I suppose it is."

They reached the car and got in it. "I wish I could . . ."

"Could what?"

"I don't know."

Frank pulled up in the Marshall driveway, and together he and Jimmy got out of the car. Jimmy pulled the pitcher out of his pocket and ran over to the sidewalk. "Look, Frank. It's the same color as the snow." And he fondled it.

"Yes, it is."

Then Jimmy dropped the pitcher on the cleared sidewalk, and watched the white glass spread over the concrete. He kicked the broken glass and laughed. "Good night, Frank."

"Good night, Jimmy." Frank got into the car and pulled out of the Marshall driveway. Back on the highway, Frank could see that the headlights had separated and they were now two, instead of one, ribbons of light. The snow continued to come down faster and faster. The highway was slippery. In two minutes . . . one, he would be home. Thirty seconds, but the car was skidding, only one ribbon of light. Glass cracking. The car had stopped.

Frank got out of the car. There was a thick wetness on his temples, but his hill was not twenty feet away. He walked through the snow to his driveway; he started walking up, but he couldn't. His hands were red, and the snow was, too. And he couldn't see the light he had left on in his living room.

MERE OU SOEUR (Continued from page 21)

dark circles and flaky skin and "I'm old," she thought, "like Mother—no, older than Mother ever could have been. Oh, help me."

Eric and Mr. Lavaine were late getting back to the farm that afternoon. Supper had to be served at a darker hour than usual. Eric had had trumpet lessons that afternoon, and he hummed as he chewed the beef put before him.

"Stop it, Son," Mr. Lavaine's voice was not harsh—only stated clearly his wants. The boy looked up.

"You don't look so good," he said. The father stared at his plate. "Does he, Liza? He don't, does he, Liza?"

"Doesn't," she said correcting him.

"Told you, Dad. Liza says so. You doesn't look so good."

"Don't," she corrected again mechanically.

"What, Liza?" he whined.

"Be quiet, Eric; you bother me, and you bother Liza." The big man wiped his mouth and left the kitchen and a half-filled plate. Eric stopped eating too.

"You know what?" There was no answer from his sister. "I said, 'You know what?' "

"What, Eric?" What could he say now? Just what? What was the matter with him? Why did he say things like that to her father? Hadn't she explained to him about annoying her father? Why couldn't Eric remember about that? Why wouldn't he grow up? Why? She couldn't handle Jack—now she couldn't even get this seven year old child to obey her? Yes—yes, he bothered her very much.

"I know what happened to Jack." His voice was low and careless, and he stirred the green peas on his plate round and round with the blade of his knife. Liza started and forced a smile. Eric was a child, always talking, dreaming, even telling white lies—always. She had to remember that. It was all natural, and she must not get hysterical. She had to be calm.

"What do you think happened to him, Eric—you've been asking me; now tell me what you think," she tried to sound calm—unconcerned.

continued on next page

"Same thing's gonna happen to Dad, same thing happened to Mother."

"Eric!" What on earth was he talking about? What had Jack's running away to do with her father's plight or her mother's death? Oh, admit it to yourself, Liza. They are all one and the same. How could Eric, simple, naive Eric, suddenly seem to understand so correctly? He must see her inadequacy too; for, it was only another part of the horrible whole. She sat stiff and watched the little boy as he idly stirred the peas and watched his plate and uttered his words.

"Mother's not coming home anymore, is she, Liza?" At last he spoke of it—at last—and she didn't want to hear it now—not from his small lips—not from his untouched soul. Was it untouched?

"God, don't make him feel it. I don't want him to feel it. Let him be quiet; let him eat his supper," she prayed now for a simple thing—just normality, just peace, but it wasn't simple.

"I'm not hungry anymore." He dropped the knife and slid from his chair. He turned at the kitchen door. "Dad will be going soon too. You'll see. I know he will." She ran after him, afraid for him to leave her sight. What would she do if he left too?

"Oh, Eric," she threw her arms around him and held him tight, "You're my brother, and I'm your big old sis," she laughed nervously and choked back tears. "That's all I am, but I'm here, and so is Dad, and he's not going away, Eric. Don't think about it, little boy. Everybody doesn't go away."

"Why do you always call me little?" There was that young contempt again. "I'm not! I'm head of the patrols in two-B." Liza didn't know the significance of two-B, but she knew what her brother meant. He had squirmed free of her hold. She looked at him as he stood there, his head hung.

"He's going to be a man," she thought, and this time the sigh was one of definite relief. "I'm sorry," she said. "I've been thinking too much about myself. That's silly, isn't it?" She was talking to him now as she used to talk to Jack, as a sister to a brother. He was her brother, not her child, and he was going to be a man; that was all she needed to realize. "Girls are silly, anyhow, aren't they?"

"Yeah!" he spoke emphatically and glanced sharply at her and then away again, and then he went out to sit on the porch with his father.

Liza watched them from the doorway. The bugs had begun to beat their tiny wings against the wire mesh. The sun had disappeared again, and another day had passed. Her brother and father never spoke, but they sat together for a long time, and Mr. Lavaine didn't seem to feel any necessity for going to a Civic Club meeting. He stayed home tonight, and they all waited for Jack together.

EXISTENCE (Continued from page 23)

mix the brown, the brown. Just a touch of red, a touch. No, no, too much, add more black, just a little, not much. Now . . . now . . . paint.

I became completely engulfed by my actions. Over and over, as if nothing could change the messages racing through my brain, I thought, the pier, the pier, the pier, paint, paint, paint. I stopped glancing out the window and continued with my mental picture as my guide. Never had I been so completely carried by my work . . . so absorbed that I worked untiringly, conscious of nothing . . . nothing.

Suddenly, as if someone had poured iced water over my body, I awakened. I stood quietly until I realized that darkness had fallen, and I was damp . . . so damp from perspiration I shivered. I turned to look out of the window and discovered that a heavy fog lay over the beach. Then, I realized that I couldn't see anything around me, and fear struck me as I realized I had been painting in darkness.

I ran to the light switch, flicked it on, and ran back to the canvas. I was so afraid to look, knowing that it was ruined, knowing that the sea and the pier were no more. But I looked and as I looked I didn't see the water, nor did I see the pier. All I could see was the figure of a young woman. There in all the darkness on my canvas, there was life. There was radiating out from the figure a feeling of life as I had never been able to create before. I wondered where she had come from, why had I put her there. I know I hadn't seen her before, because when I looked at her I felt like a child who had found something he must have and at the same time realized it was not his to keep. I wondered.

The rest of the week I spent searching for the figure in red, but I never saw her. I prayed for foggy days, for then at times I felt I caught a glimpse of her dark blown hair or creamy hand waving in the mist. But when I looked again there was nothing there but the fog and the bay.

There were times when I almost convinced myself that she existed. I would sit and stare at the painting, sometimes for hours at a time. During these times she grew deeper and deeper into my soul, and I knew that somewhere she had to exist. But where . . . but where! Suddenly something someone had once told me came into my thoughts. Clearly, I heard repeated "That which is created within the imagination can never be real until it is returned to the imagination." Then I knew, I knew at last what was wrong.

The next morning I took my painting and went down to the shore. I stood for a long while looking at the dark brown pilings supporting the pier. The heat from the sun seemed to weight the canvas under my arm, but it felt good . . . it felt good.

Continued on next page

As I approached the pier some words of Marcus Aurelius that I had always liked when in school passed through my mind. "Nowhere, either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble, does a man retire than into his own soul." Remembering this, I realized that what I was about to do was right. I no longer had any qualms about my decision. I was right, so right.

I had reached the platform at the end of the pier. I walked slowly to the railing and looked down into the water. Calmly, I raised my arms and dropped my precious canvas into the waiting waves. The foam covered it quickly, and then it was gone.

I stood looking out over the bay, watching the clouds forming at the horizon move slowly over me. I felt the heat of the sun on my skin, but it did not bother me because I knew it would not last long. The gathering clouds assured me that tomorrow there would be no sun, only rain.

I turned and walked back down the pier toward the house. "Maybe I'll go to bed early,"I thought. "This morning will come sooner, and with it the rain, the fog, and maybe . . . maybe . . .

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Best of Food — Best of Service

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